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ABSTRACT

A profusely illustrated student instruction booklet contains step-by-step directions and diagrams for learning four basic casting techniques. Separate sections cover basic spin-casting, spinning, bait-casting, and fly-casting. Each section details recommended equipment (reel, rod, line, plug, tackle, lures, leaders, flies), describes specific casting techniques, and provides drawings and information about the types of fish caught using each technique. Section 1 covers overhead and side casts made with closed-face spin-casting reels and rods, using light-to-medium monofilament line to catch smallmouth bass, chain pickeral, and red-ear sunfish. Section 2 focuses on overhead and side casts made with open-face spinning reels and rods, using balanced spinning tackle to catch brook trout, sauger, northern pike, black crappie, and white bass. Section 3 includes information about overhead bait-casts made with level-wind reels and bait-casting rods, using 10-14-pound test line and surface, floating-diving, and sinking lures to catch bullhead, bluegill, largemouth bass, walleye, and muskellunge. Section 4 considers the overhead cast and line hand techniques, using manual fly reels, fly rods, and wet or dry flies to catch rainbow trout and American shad. A reference section diagrams and describes knots (improved blood knot, improved clinch knot, nail knot) and the morphology of a fish. (NEC)

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Basic Casting from A to Z

Student's Instruction Booklet

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Forward

They say that great fisherman are born, not made. Maybe so. But you don't have to be a "great" fisherman to enjoy the benefits this sport has to offer. If you like the thrill of the chase, being outdoors, and the occasional chance to "get away from it all", you're already on the road to fishing fun.

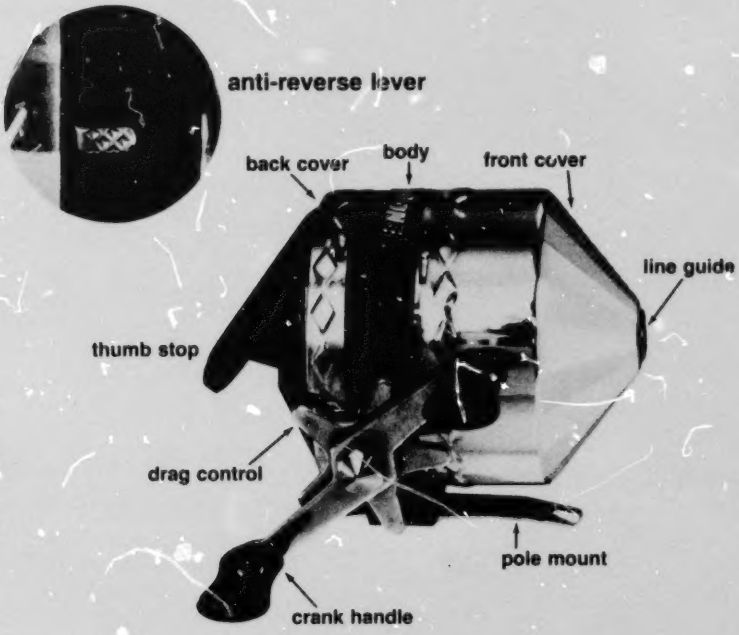
This booklet is designed to help you take that first step. It deals with basic casting techniques, primarily the side and overhead casts. Having mastered these, you'll find it much easier to move into the more complex casts — such as fly fishing's "roll cast" (not covered).

We suggest that you read this booklet through before beginning your course of study. And that you check any questions you might have with your instructor or other experienced caster. Above all—practice! In your front yard, a vacant lot, or anyplace you can find the space.

It's a great world, our world of casting, and you're welcome to it!

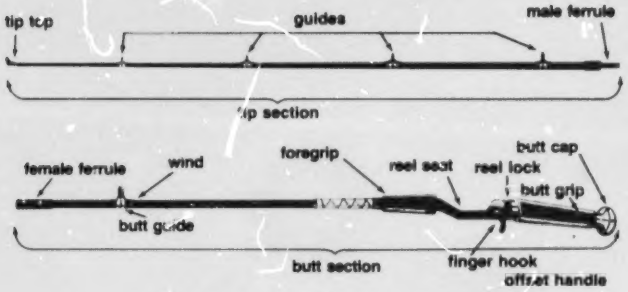
Basic Spin-Casting

Selecting Your Equipment



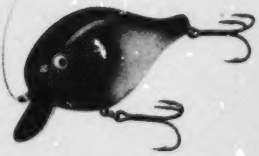
A. Closed-Face Spin-Casting Reel
America's favorite "fishing machine", the closed-face spin-casting reel is an all around reel. Its advantages include a combination fixed-spool/closed-cover design which eliminates backlash plus a thumb stop which makes line control easier. For most purposes, a light-to-medium freshwater rig is ample.

B. Spin-Casting Rod
The weight of the lure to be cast, not that of the anticipated catch, generally determines the rod to be selected. Beginners will find they learn fastest on a light-action model in the 5½-6-foot category.



C. Line and Plug

Light-to-medium lines and plugs are definitely recommended. Optimum is a combination of 6-to-10-pound-test line with ¼-⅜-ounce lure. Use monofilament line only. Braided lines tend to pile up inside the reel housing.

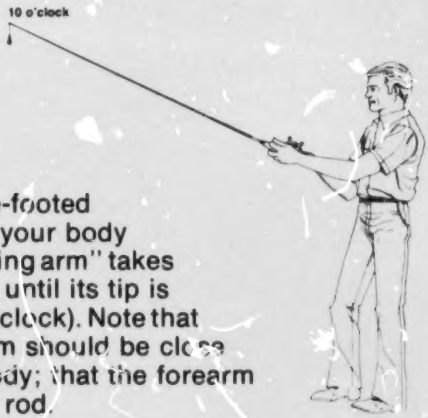


Making Your Play

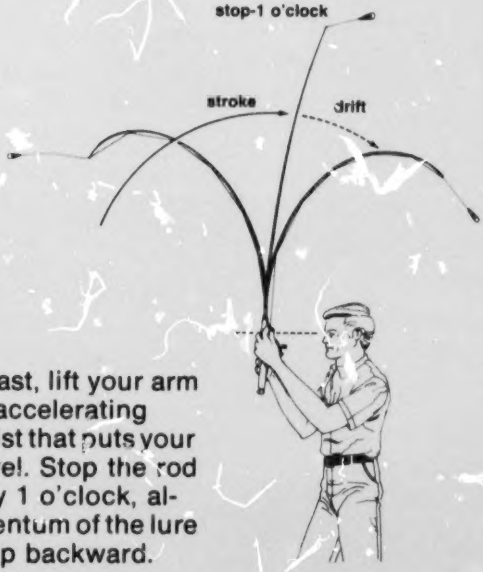
A. The overhead cast

a. The two-handed cast results in greater accuracy, even for experienced spin-cast fishermen. Using the "rod hand", hold your rod with its reel handles pointing up, your thumb depressing the thumb stop. Now place your "line hand" just ahead of the reel as shown and take the line lightly between your thumb and index finger. Got it? Try this. Depress the thumb stop and let the weight of your plug take the line out. Feel it slip through your thumb and finger? Do it again, and this time use that same

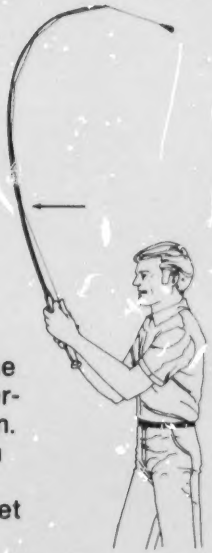
thumb and finger to slow the line down a bit. Now one more time — only this time stop the line completely: at 12 inches; at the halfway mark; just as the plug touches the floor. The rest is easy and you've only just begun.



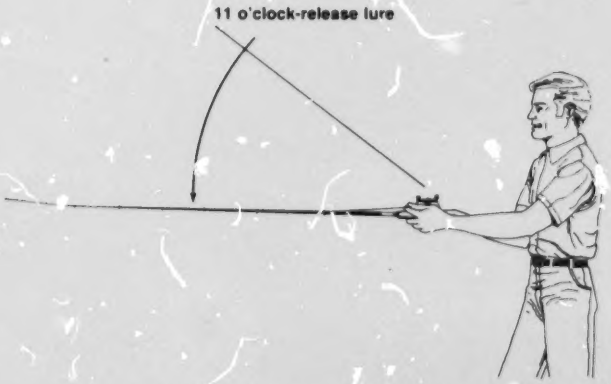
b. Assume a casual, sure-footed stance before the target, your body angled so that your "pitching arm" takes the lead. Now lift the rod until its tip is just above the target (10 o'clock). Note that your elbow and upper arm should be close to, but not against the body; that the forearm parallels the angle of the rod.



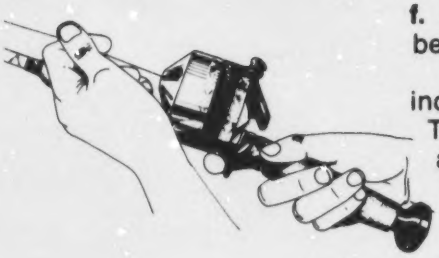
c. To start the cast, lift your arm with a smooth, accelerating motion of the wrist that puts your hand right at eye-level. Stop the rod at approximately 1 o'clock, allowing the momentum of the lure to flex the rod tip backward.



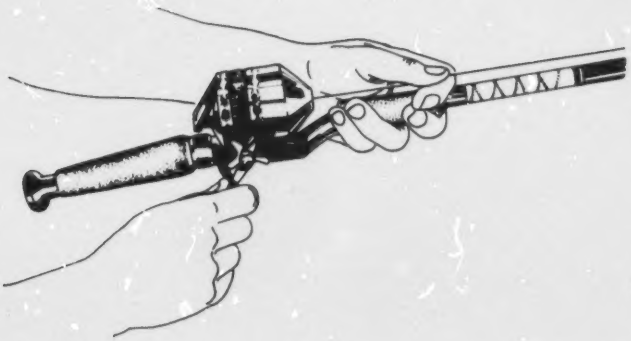
d. Without hesitation, commence the forward stroke with a quickly accelerated motion of the wrist and forearm. Follow exactly the same path as you took on the upstroke. At about 11 o'clock, release the thumb stop to set the lure in flight.



e. Follow through by lowering the tip of the rod to follow the flight of the lure. Note: if the lure goes straight up into the air, you released the line too soon; if it takes a nose-dive at your feet, you let go too late.

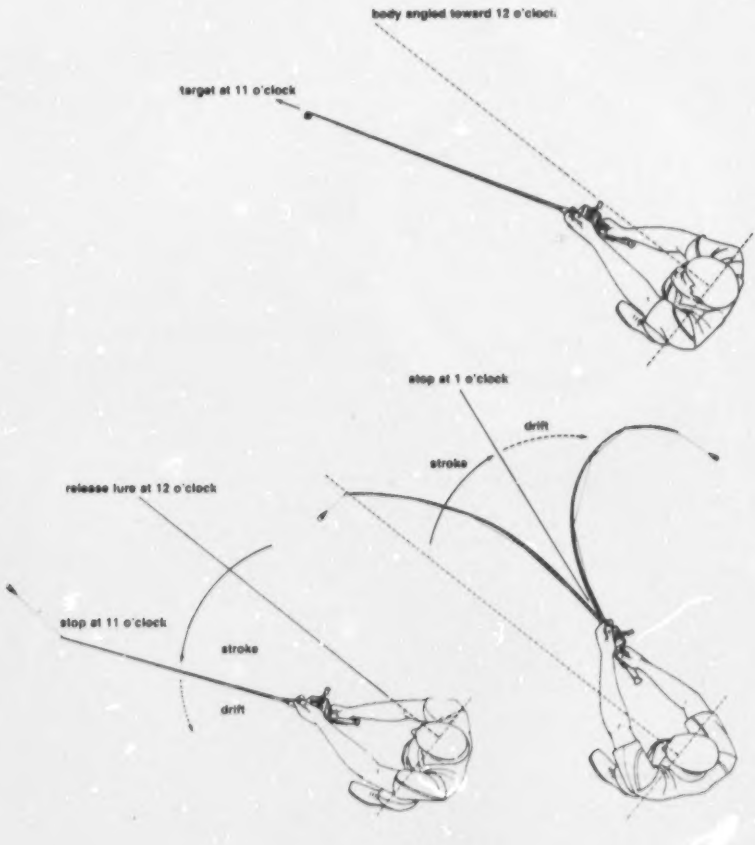


f. As the lure nears the target, begin to apply pressure to the line with the thumb and index finger of your line hand. This braking, or "feathering" action allows pinpoint accuracy by bringing the lure to a slow, gentle stop. More precise than relying on the thumb stop, it also prevents the line from back-looping inside your reel.



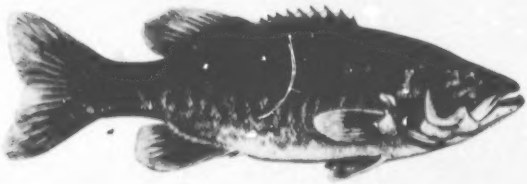
g. Retrieval is simply a matter of turning the crank handle. There's no need even to switch the rod to the other hand, for your "other" hand has been there from the beginning. Let the line flow through the thumb and index finger of this hand on its way back to the reel. It's a trick that serves to maintain tension on the pickup mechanism and to clean the line for another trouble-free cast.

B. The side cast



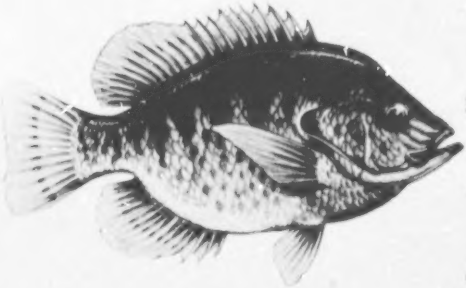
The fundamentals of the side cast are essentially the same for all types of casting and spinning gear. They are: a) to stand with your body angled away from the target, your weight on the foot opposite your casting arm; b) to whip the rod back to a point about 1 o'clock; c) at the point of deepest bend, to commence the forward thrust — the thumb releasing its lever at 12 o'clock and the rod stopping at 11 o'clock.

Knowing Your Catch



SMALLMOUTH BASS. Widely acclaimed as the best fighter of all the black bass. Unlike the largemouth, the jaw of the smallmouth does not extend past the eye. He is an early morning/late afternoon feeder who will tackle a variety of live and artificial baits.

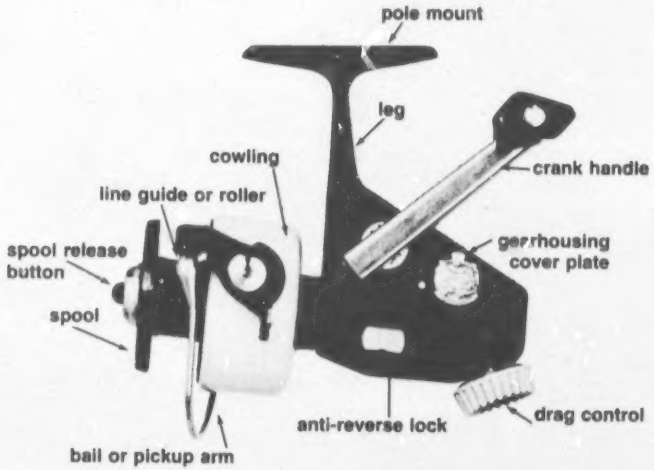
CHAIN PICKERAL. A smaller but active member of the pike family found in eastern and southern states. Ultra-light tackle is ideal for this fighter; but watch him, he's crafty and will snag your line if you let him. Keep your anti-reverse on, your drag low, and your line tight.



RED EAR SUNFISH. A popular panfish in the South. Similar to the pumpkinseed in appearance, the red ear is a plump fish who prefers live bait. He'll be found in large, quiet waters where he tends to congregate around stumps and roots.

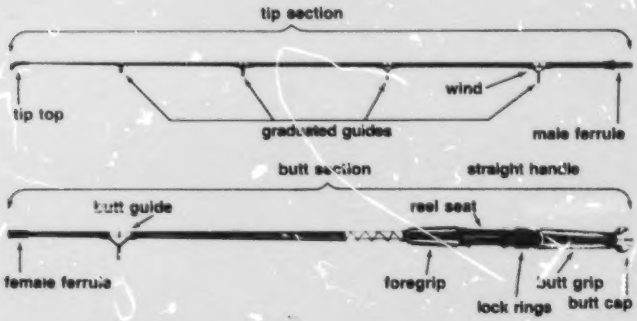
Basic Spinning

Selecting Your Equipment



A. Open-Face Spinning Reel
To the beginner, the spinning reel's fixed spool system offers several advantages. It is far less likely to backlash than the revolving spool reel. It permits the casting of lighter lures, further, with less effort. A light-to-medium reel is suitable.

B. Spinning Rod
Spinning rods are characterized by straight handles and graduated ring guides. Generally speaking, they can be divided into five classes, ultralight to extra-heavy; each class determined by the optimum lure weight range of each rod. (See "Balanced Fishing Tackle".) For class and general tournament purposes, use a light-action, 5½-6½-foot rod capable of casting ¼-⅜-ounce lures.



C. Line and Plug

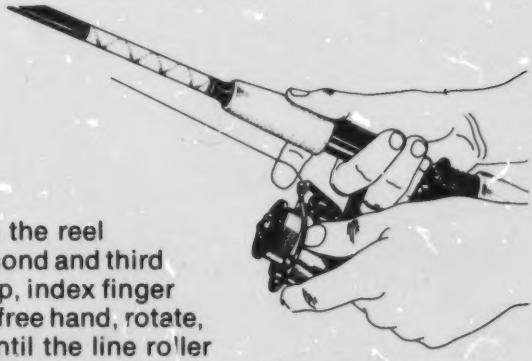
A 6 or 8-pound-test, flexible monofilament line should be used for practice, competition, and most freshwater fishing. Plugs weighing ¼ to ⅜ ounce are ideal for practice. Rubber plugs are recommended for indoor use.

D. Balanced Spinning Tackle

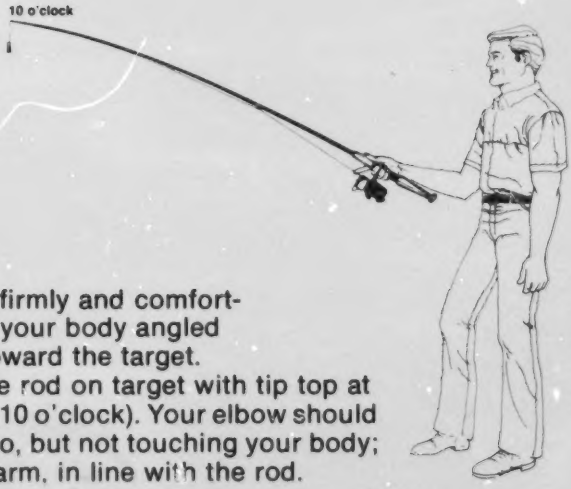
Line diameter (inches)	Approximate test (pounds)	Lure weight (ounces)	Rod class
.005-.006	1.75	1/32-3/16	Ultralight
.006-.007	2.25	1/16-1/8	Ultralight
.007-.008	3.00	1/16-1/8	Ultralight
.008-.009	4.00	1/8-1/4	Ultralight
.009-.010	5.00	1/4-3/8	Light
.010-.011	6.00	1/4-3/8	Light
.011-.012	7.00	1/4-3/8	Medium-Light
.012-.013	8.00	3/8-1/2	Medium
.013-.014	9.50	3/8-1/2	Medium
.015-.018	14.00	3/8-5/8	Heavy
.018-.020	17.00	5/8-103	Extra-heavy
.021-.024	22.00	5/8-103	Extra-heavy

Making Your Play

A. The overhead cast



a. Grip the rod with the reel leg between your second and third fingers: thumb on top, index finger extended. With your free hand, rotate, the reel's cowling until the line roller is directly beneath the extended index finger. Pick up the line with the top of that finger. Now cock the bail by flopping it open and you're ready to start your cast.



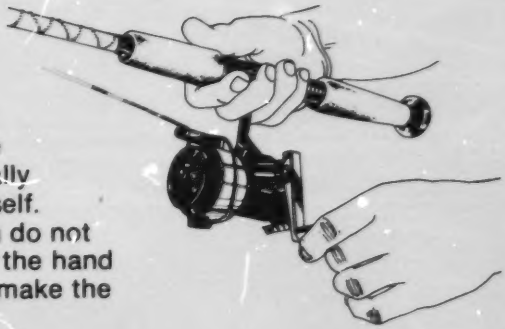
b. Stand firmly and comfortably with your body angled slightly toward the target. Center the rod on target with tip top at eye level (10 o'clock). Your elbow should be close to, but not touching your body; your forearm, in line with the rod.

c. Begin the cast by swiftly raising the hand almost to eye level, pivoting at the elbow.

d. When the rod reaches the 1 o'clock position, the weight of the lure will cause it to bend to the rear. As it does so, bring the rod immediately forward in a crisp downstroke.

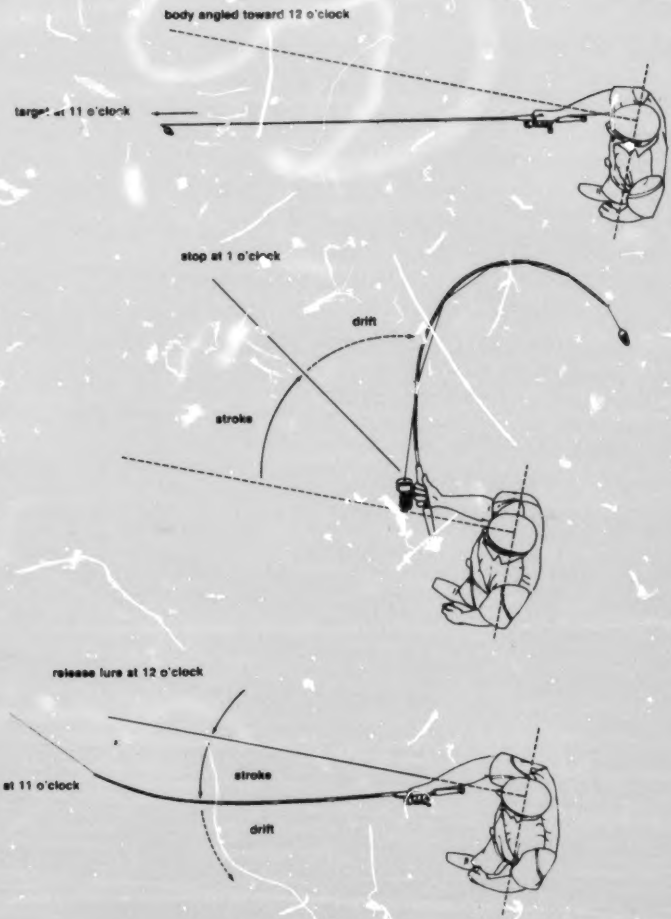
e. At about 11 o'clock, release your finger hold on the line. The lure should be in the right trajectory for a long and true cast. Remember: if the lure goes straight up, you released it too soon; if "plop" in front of you, the release came too late. Practice until you get the feel of the timing.

f. As the lure nears the target, gently brake, or "feather" the line with your index finger. The moment contact is made, simply place your finger on the edge of the spool. This will create a block that will not only stay the flight of the lure, but help to prevent slack line build-up on the spool.



g. As you begin the retrieve, the line guide pickup will automatically flop over to engage itself. Unlike baitcasting, you do not switch hands, but use the hand that is already free to make the retrieve.

B. The side cast

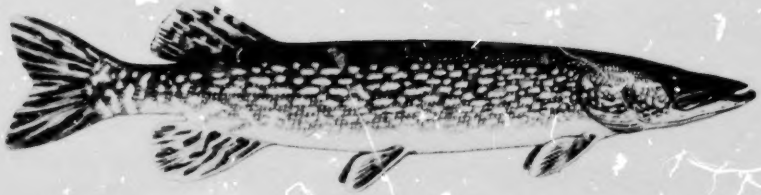


The same fundamentals of timing and motion apply here as to the overhead cast. In this instance, however, limbs or other overhead obstructions have forced us to keep our casting arc parallel with the ground. Since the arc may also be smaller, extra emphasis on wrist action is in order.

Knowing Your Catch

BROOK TROUT. A beautiful, cold water gamefish distinguished by red spots with blue aureoles on its sides; dark wavy lines on the back and dorsal fin. Depending on local conditions, it will succumb to almost any live or artificial bait.

SAUGER. A close cousin and similar to the walleye in every way but size (the walleye is larger) and tail coloring (the walleye has a white tip). Averaging 1-3 pounds, the sauger thrives in large lakes and rivers. Favored fishing time is early winter, when the species concentrates below the large dams of the Midwest and South.



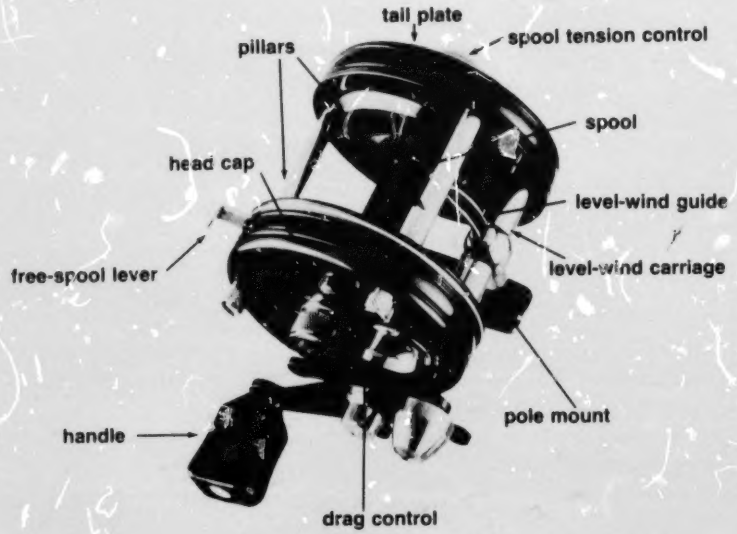
NORTHERN PIKE. The gamefish whose voracity and cunning have made it legend. Normal weight: 3-10 pounds. Home: the clear running waterways of the North and upper Midwest. Food: anything that gets in its way.

BLACK CRAPPIE. A popular panfish with a flattened appearance and silvery sides grading to black on the back. The species makes its home in less turbid waters than white crappie; often travels in schools.

WHITE BASS. One of the only two species of true bass found exclusively in freshwater. Known to school and feed on the surface during the later summer months, the white bass is best fished early or toward evening using light tackle.

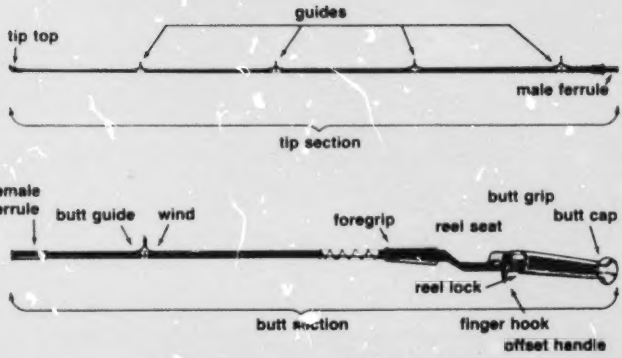
Basic Bait-Casting

Selecting Your Equipment



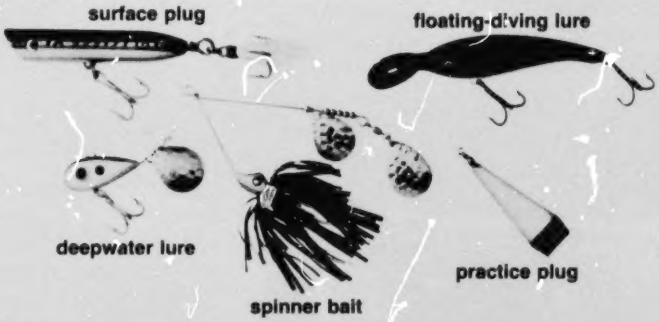
A. Bait-Casting Level-Wind Reel
A free-spool, medium priced level-wind reel is recommended for beginning bait-casters. Its features will include independent tension-control systems for the spool and for the line plus a free-spool device which disengages the handle from the spool gears during the cast.

B. Bait-Casting Rod
The only difference between a bait-casting rod and a spin-casting rod is the title the particular manufacturer chooses to give it. Again, the rule of balanced tackle should apply. Preferrable for beginners is a fairly flexible 5—6-foot rod using bait or lures weighing ⅜-⅝ ounces.



C. Bait-Casting Lines

A 10—12-pound-test braided or monofilament line is suitable for practice and average-size freshwater fish. Surf casters prefer braided nylon because they feel it is less likely to backlash. Trollers like the stretch-resistance of braided dacron. Most widely used by all types of fishermen is the single strand of nylon known as monofilament.



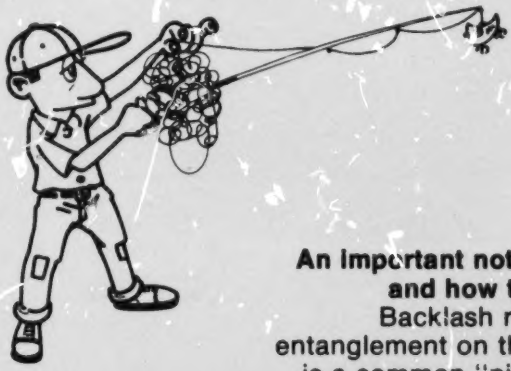
D. Bait-Casting Lures

Should you be confused by the variety, remember that lures fall into three basic categories: 1) surface; 2) floating-diving; 3)

sinking. To start out, choose a few varied-color samples of each — no more than a dozen in all — and learn to use them well. Be sure to include a barbless plug for practice casting.

Making Your Play

A. The overhead cast

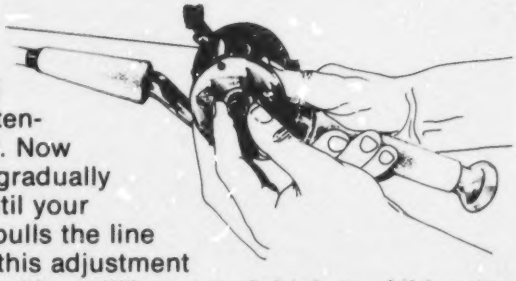


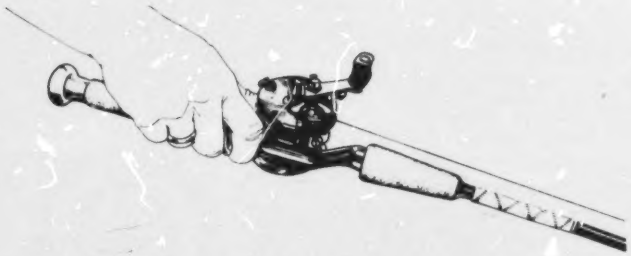
An important note: backlash, and how to prevent it. Backlash refers to line-entanglement on the spool and is a common "pitfall" in bait-casting. When a lure is first cast, both line and lure are traveling at about the same speed. The lure encounters wind-resistance, however, and almost immediately begins to slow up. The spool, meanwhile, is still obeying the command of the initial thrust and is not so quick to lose its momentum. Its line peels off with no where to go and begins to counter-wrap itself.

Backlash can be avoided by use of the "great equalizer" — your thumb. Placed lightly against the spool from the outset of the cast, its pressure can be gradually increased to keep lure, line and spool in time with each other. When the moment arrives, you can supply the thumb pressure necessary to stop the flow of line altogether, hitting the target right on the nose.

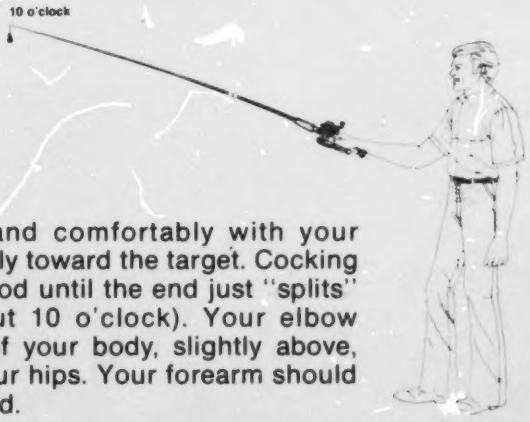
It takes practice, true. But there's no mystery to preventing backlash.

a. Prepare for the cast by putting your reel in free-spool and tightening the spool tension knob all the way. Now hold the rod level and gradually lessen the tension until your practice plug slowly pulls the line to the ground. Make this adjustment each time you cast with a different weight lure. Add extra tension when casting into the wind.

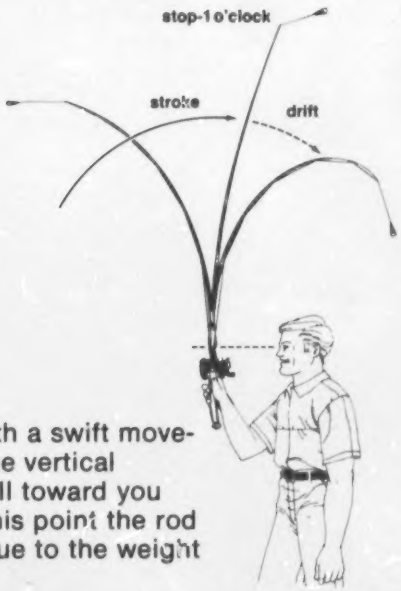




b. Hold the rod as shown with the reel handles pointed up. With the reel in free-spool, rest your thumb on the line.

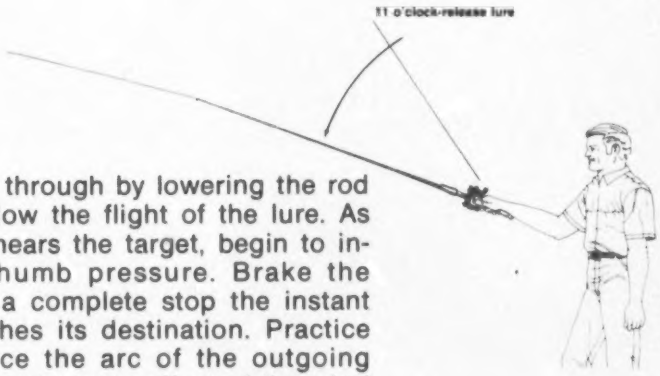


c. Stand firmly and comfortably with your body angled slightly toward the target. Cocking your arm, lift the rod until the end just "splits" your target (about 10 o'clock). Your elbow should be clear of your body, slightly above, and in front of, your hips. Your forearm should line up with the rod.



d. Start the overhead cast with a swift movement that brings the rod to the vertical position — the reel handle still toward you and just below eye level. At this point the rod will develop a casting bend due to the weight of the lure.

e. Without hesitation, begin the downstroke, using a slight wrist-twist for added power. As the rod reaches the 11 o'clock position, ease off on thumb pressure. The lure is soon in flight, with your thumb gently braking the unwinding spool.



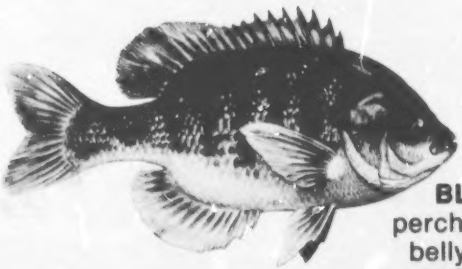
f. Follow through by lowering the rod tip to follow the flight of the lure. As the lure nears the target, begin to increase thumb pressure. Brake the spool to a complete stop the instant lure reaches its destination. Practice will reduce the arc of the outgoing line, and with it, the effect of the wind upon your aim.

g. As with spin-casting, we are again "palming" the reel on the retrieve. One hand takes a combination hold on the reel, forward grip, and line while the other hand turns the handle.

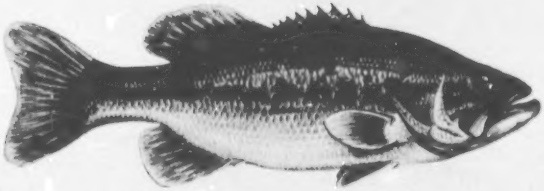
h. Only experience can teach you how fast to retrieve. By rule of thumb, it should be only so fast as necessary for your lure to achieve its designed action. If that happens to be wobbling along the bottom, then let it wobble along the bottom; if popping along the surface, then make it pop along the surface. One approach is to vary the rate of retrieve until you find the right lure action. If a fish follows but does not strike, for instance, try slowing down your retrieve on the next cast. If still nothing — speed things up.

Knowing Your Catch

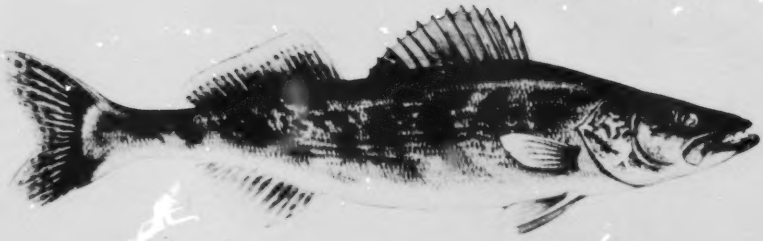
BULLHEAD. An extremely hardy catfish found in forty-six of our fifty states. He prefers live bait and is best fished overnight in warm waters. Unlike the channel cat, his tail is not so deeply forked.



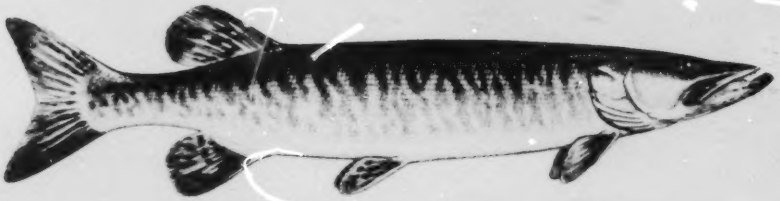
BLUEGILL. Alias bream, sun perch, blue sunfish, and copper belly. One of the more popular panfish, it prefers quiet, weedy waters; will take any kind of small bait, natural or artificial.



LARGEMOUTH BASS. A North American favorite who thrives in shallower waterways with lots of undergrowth. Distinguishing characteristics include a more noticeably separated dorsal fin than that of the smallmouth; a jaw that extends beyond his eye.



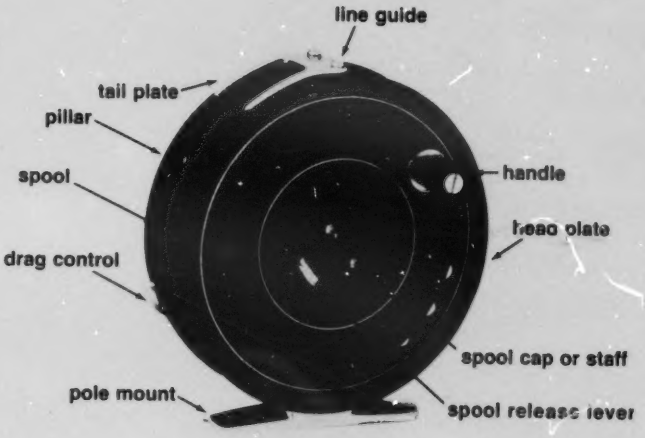
WALLEYE. Most common to the large, cool lakes of the northern states and Canada. The largest member of the perch family, it attains a weight of over 20 pounds. Minnows are a good bait for this carnivorous species.



MUSKELLUNGE. A "prize" fighter that bites best in the late fall. Among the largest members of the pike family, muskellunge can attain weights of 30-60 pounds. "Fish these in the afternoons," say muskie fishermen, "with short casts and lots of patience."

Basic Fly-Casting

Selecting Your Equipment

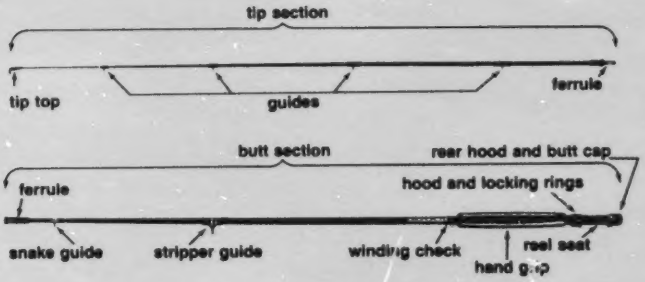


A. Manual Fly Reel

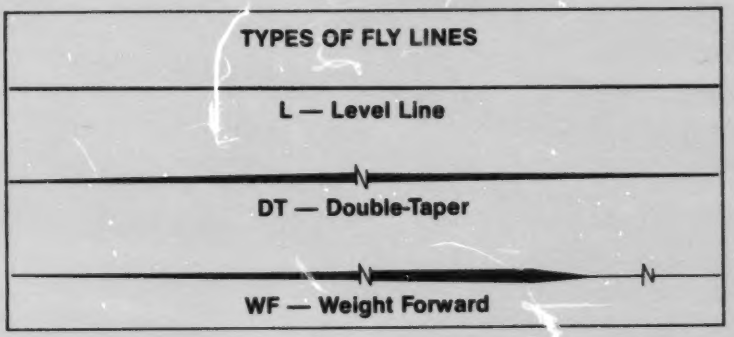
Since the fly fisherman strips the line from his reel before casting, the fly cast reel spends most of its time serving only as a line storage unit. When it is called into action, however, it is rigorous action, and that's why the right reel is important. In selecting your fly reel, look for one which has: a) the capacity for holding 30-35 yards of fly line plus at least 150 yards of braided back-up line; b) a consistent, adjustable drag; c) a handy, interchangeable spool.

B. Fly Rod

An 8-foot rod matched to a No. 7 or No. 8 line is a wise investment for the first-time fly fisherman. In buying, "switch" the rod crisply to test for medium play. Check to see that the top of the rod is not too "soft". The ideal fly rod will combine strength and flexibility in both the butt and tip sections, and have a smooth, even bend.



C. Line



A.F.T.M.A. FLY-LINE STANDARD

WT. GRAINS*	60	80	100	120	140	160	185	210	240	280	330	380
NO.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

*Plus or minus .10

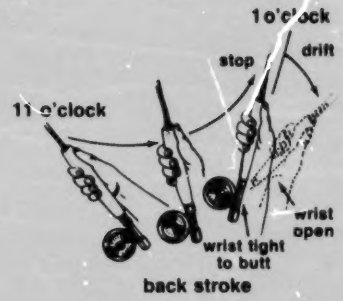
D. Leader and Fly

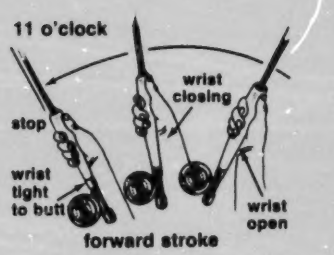
Depending on what they're taking, you'll fish with one of two types of flies: wet flies — fished below the surface; dry flies — fished on top. A 7½-foot leader line allows the fly to drift insect-like while forming an invisible bond to your fly line. Use a bright yellow or white fly. Cut the hook from the fly and use only the hair portion for practice purposes.

Making Your Play

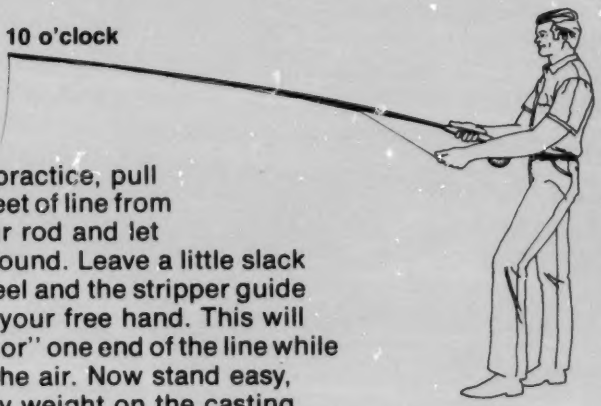
A. The overhead cast

a. The fly rod must be held as shown in order to perform correctly. With your fingers, take a "suitcase" grip on the handle. Line your thumb up with the rod and place it as near the top as you comfortably can. (It is in this position that the thumb will brake the rod in the back cast; apply pressure for the forward cast.) Bend your wrist until the rod becomes a parallel extension of your forearm.

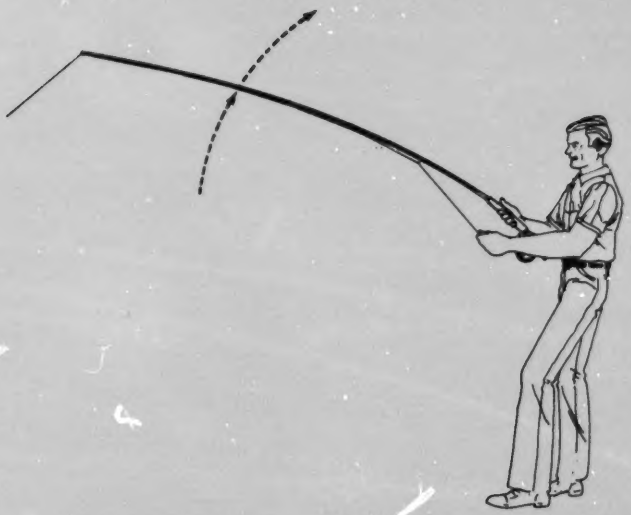




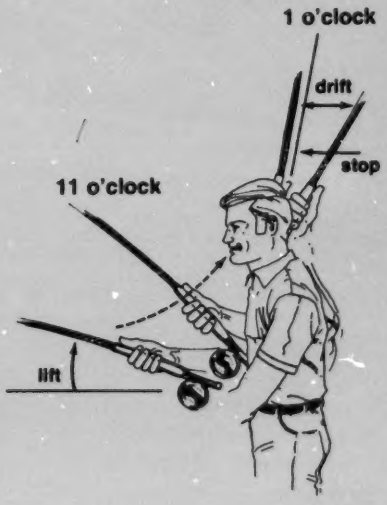
b. The perfect casting stroke takes place between 11 o'clock and 1 o'clock. Since the angle of the cast is a relatively small 30 degrees, there may be a temptation to let the wrist do all the work. Resist it, or suffer an exaggerated, crooked arc. Instead, study the relationship of the wrist to the rod in these illustrations. Note that the entire hand must travel in a nearly straight line, with a slight upward lift through the back cast; a slight overhand on the forward cast.



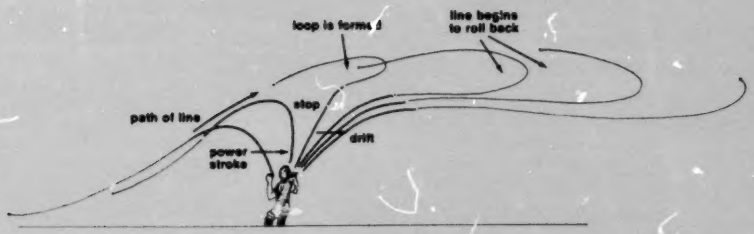
c. By way of practice, pull some twenty feet of line from the top of your rod and let it lie on the ground. Leave a little slack between the reel and the stripper guide and take it in your free hand. This will serve to "anchor" one end of the line while the rest is in the air. Now stand easy, with your body weight on the casting arm side.



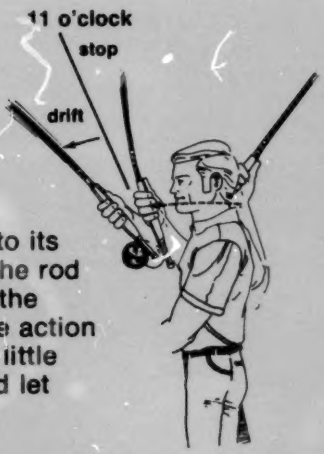
d. Begin your back cast with a smooth, even lift-off. Don't jerk. A hard, ripping pull not only scares fish but improperly sets the line in motion. Raise the rod until the leader is almost clear of the ground. A slow-starting, rapidly-accelerating movement will smoothly pick up the line.



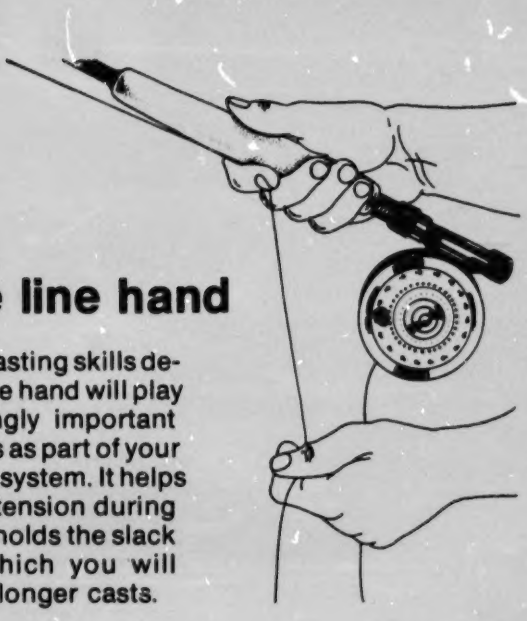
e. As the rod passes the 11 o'clock point, speed up the backward motion and flip the line up and back. stopping the rod hard at 1 o'clock. Immediately open your wrist enough to allow the rod to drift back with the weight of the line.



f. Fearing the line will fall, your natural impulse will be to start the forward cast instantaneously. Don't give in! Take a definite pause, turn your head, and watch as the line loops and rolls out behind you.

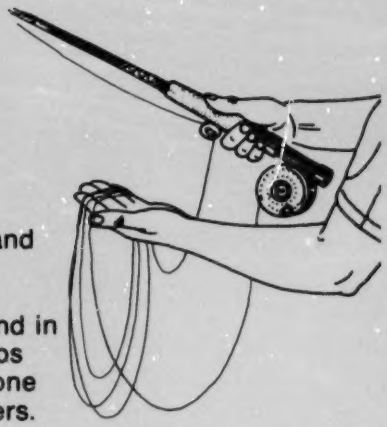


g. The back cast rolled almost out to its end, begin the forward cast. Move the rod smoothly, closing the gap between the rod and wrist as you do so. Stop the action hard at 11 o'clock. Give it that final little flip that results in extra footage, and let your hand follow through with the casting stroke.

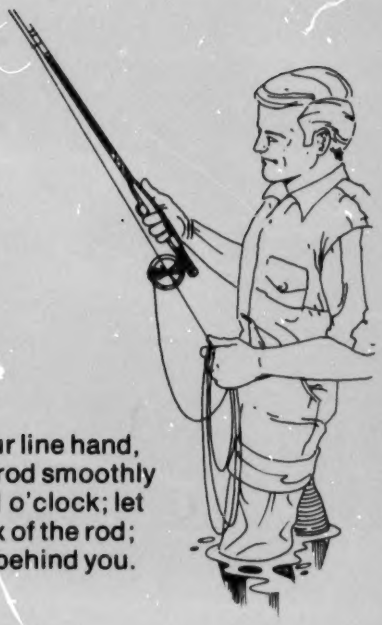


B. The line hand

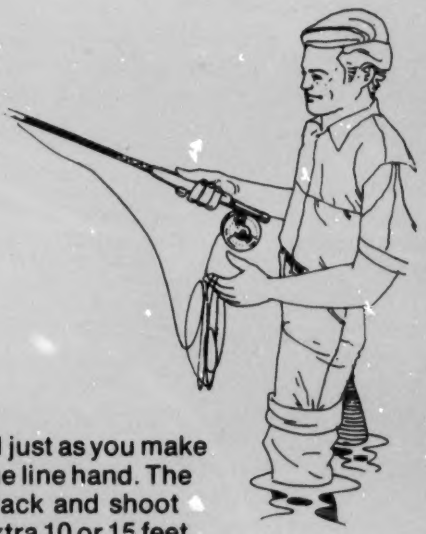
a. As your casting skills develop, the line hand will play an increasingly important role. It serves as part of your line retrieval system. It helps to maintain tension during the strike. It holds the slack line with which you will "shoot" for longer casts.



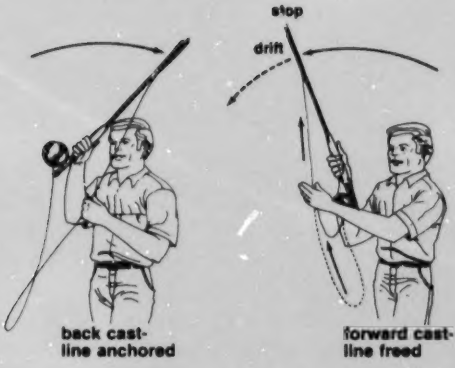
b. To prepare to shoot the line, pull the 20 or 30 feet you have been use to from the tip of the rod. Now increase the length of your "anchor loop" between the reel and stripper guide by another 10-15 feet. Take this additional line across the palm of your line hand in long, loose loops. Keep the loops separate and in order, the last one lying nearest the tip of the fingers.



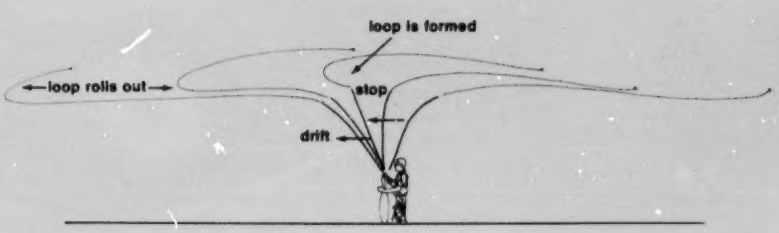
c. Keeping the line taut with your line hand, commence your cast. Raise the rod smoothly to 11 o'clock; speed up; stop at 1 o'clock; let your wrist drift open with the flex of the rod; turn and watch the loop roll out behind you. Start forward.



d. Stop hard at 11 o'clock. And just as you make that final flip of the rod, open the line hand. The momentum will pick up the slack and shoot it through the guides for that extra 10 or 15 feet.

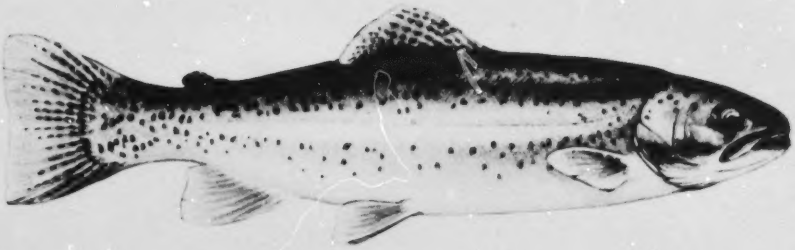


e. The line hand also comes into play during the "false cast". The false cast is an incomplete cast which is repeated again and again — either to dry out a water-logged fly or to extend the reach of the line. In the latter instance, the line hand's work is coordinated with the back-and-forth strokes, continuing to free-up additional line until the target is reached.



f. Each time the 11 o'clock position is reached on the forward cast the line hand lets a few feet of line shoot out; then tightens up again. A new back cast is started as soon as the forward loop is rolled out and before it has a chance to fall to the water. When you have reached your target, or have as much line in the air as you can handle, go ahead and complete the cast.

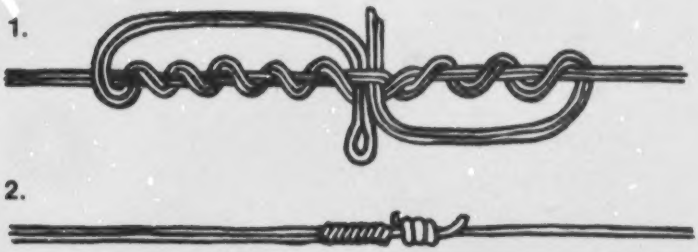
Knowing Your Catch



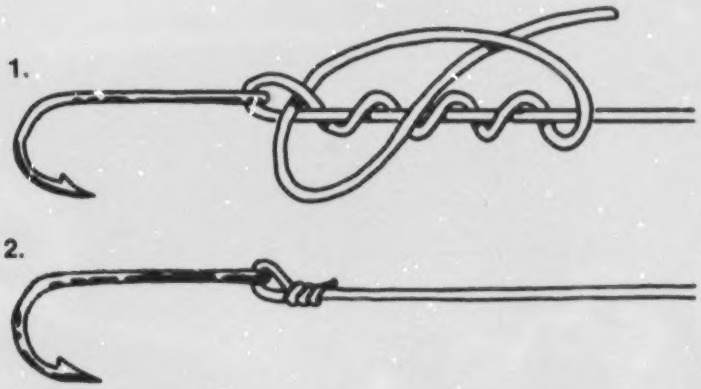
RAINBOW TROUT. An aquatic leopard which changes its spots to match its environment. The migratory rainbow — steelhead — is a pink-banded fighter found in northwest rivers at spawning time. His capture requires heavier tackle, with back-up lines of at least 100 yards.

AMERICAN SHAD. Found in spawning rivers from San Diego to southern Alaska, in the West; Connecticut to Florida, in the East. Fish him with weighted wet flies, using no.'s 2, 4, 6 Sproat or O'Shaughnessy hooks.

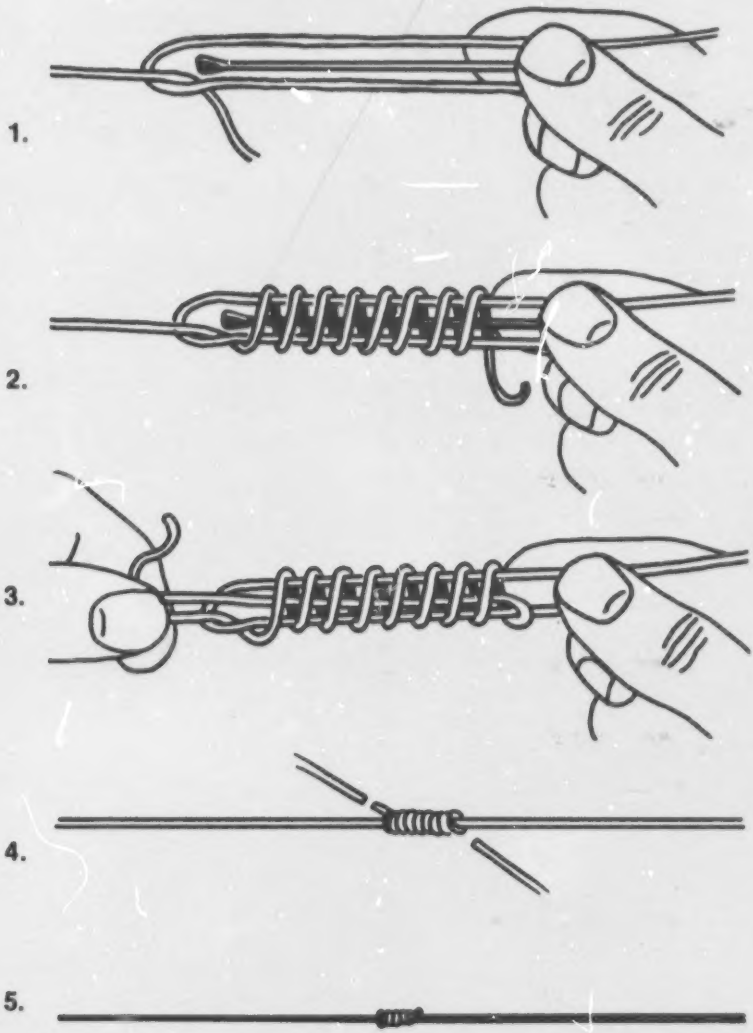
Reference-- Knots and Anatomy



IMPROVED BLOOD KNOT. Use this knot when tying a heavy "shock" leader to a much smaller monofilament line. Tie as shown, but be sure to double the smaller mono strand and treat it as a single line.

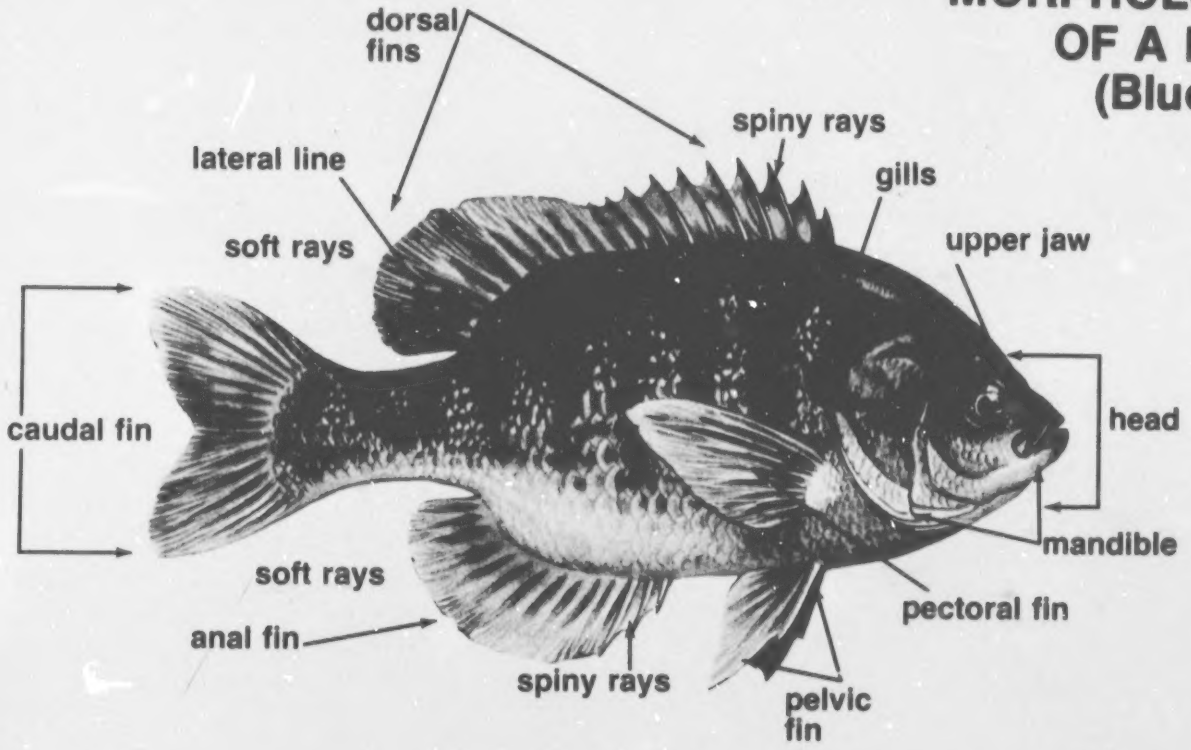


IMPROVED CLINCH KNOT. Similar to tying one-half of a blood knot with the exception of running the end of the line through the loop. This is an excellent knot for attaching lures or swivels to monofilament line.



NAIL KNOT. Here's a high-impact knot that can be used for tying lines of equal or different diameter. It's small and slips easily through the rod guides. The nail gives you something to shape your line around, and once removed, leaves a "tunnel" through which to pass the free end of the line.

MORPHOLOGY OF A FISH (Bluegill)



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